MARKET SEGMENT REPORT: SEA

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4/18/87

Restaura Business

A BILL PUBLICATION

VOL. 86, NO. 17

The Making of a Menu

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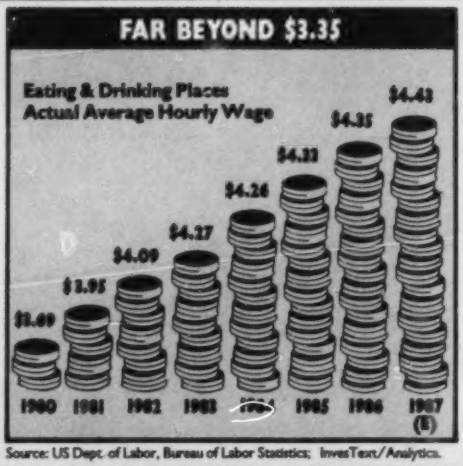
BUSINESS BAROMETER

The Hard Facts Shaping Our Industry

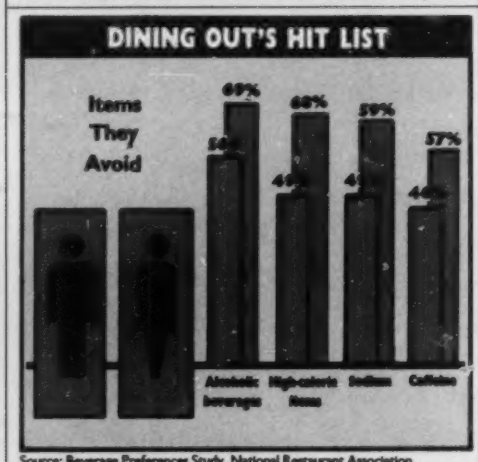
By Howard Riell



Source: US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; InvesText/Analytics.

How Much Does Minimum Wage Matter?

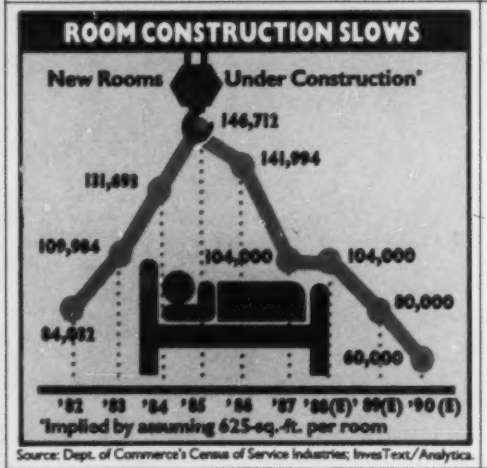
While some industry leaders continue to prophesy doom and gloom when—no longer if—Congress raises the current $3.35 minimum wage, others point wisely to an often-overlooked fact: A large portion of the industry already pays its help salaries far above the minimum, even above the speculated new minimum of $3.65 to $4 an hour. In fact, the industry's average hourly salary passed the $4 mark five years ago. A higher minimum wage *will* hurt some operators, especially in the fast food segment. But with labor shortages so prevalent, many have already raised their salaries in order to simply man the kitchens.



Source: Beverage Preferences Study, National Restaurant Association.

What Restaurant Patrons Avoid Ordering

While operators hurt by lagging liquor sales and stung by skyrocketing liability insurance costs may have already known that alcohol would top the list of things diners have been avoiding lately, they may not know why. The NRA's study shows that the majority of those who avoid alcohol say they do so because they "don't enjoy alcoholic beverages anymore," not because of drunk driving concerns (that ranked third, behind health reasons). Overall, women seemed more likely to purposely avoid the items on the list, especially high-calorie foods. The sexes agreed most on their aversion to caffeine.



Source: Dept. of Commerce's Census of Service Industries; InvesText/Analytics.

Hotel/Motel Room Construction Slows

The overbuilding burden saddling the lodging industry in recent years is grinding to a halt. Supply is coming closer to demand. That means that, with fewer rooms, more of the existing ones will be full. Says the Department of Commerce, "Business will remain competitive, but oversupply is not overwhelming the industry. Anything under 100,000 new room openings per year would help occupancy, room rates and profits." The addition of 100,000 or more rooms annually, from 1984 to 1987, is still troubling the industry. DOC feels that, given current tax laws, the building lull could continue for several more years.

CHARTS DESIGNED BY SHARI FANG

Restaurant Business

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Cover Story

STRATEGIES **MENU MAKING.** *The menu is the crucial factor in a restaurant's conceptualization, a guide for its design, construction and equipment, and a working document for managing its day-to-day operations. Furthermore, the menu is the starting point for the marketing of a restaurant. In a period of fierce competition, both chain and independent operators are regarding menu-making as a serious, scientific affair, from the development of a new menu item to choosing the typeface and color of the menu.* RB *presents a comprehensive plan for planning, pricing and marketing menus*..... 131

Food and Beverage

DRAFTS, CARAFES & SPIRITS **HOT DRINKS.** *Operators can capitalize on cold weather by promoting hot specialties. A dash of spirits can turn a 50¢ cup of coffee into a signature drink commanding a $5 price tag*..... 211

MENU IDEAS **SOUPS AND STEWS.** *Soups and stews are perceived as healthy and hearty with good price/value. They can be prepared in large quantities for high-volume operations or à la minute upon demand. The* RB *Test Kitchen offers recipes and tips*..... 217

PIECE MEAL **DIPS.** *America's love affair with strong, concentrated flavors has led to the increasing popularity of piquant dips*..... 225

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MANAGEMENT **TABLE TURNS.** *Long lines waiting to get into your restaurant may seem like a good thing, but they can indicate a fatal imbalance in your table mix, leading to lost sales*..... 80

STAFF APPEARANCE **PART I.** *Staff grooming is one of the least glamorous issues restaurateurs wrestle with, but is also one of the most important. This first of three parts focuses on the statement that your staff's appearance makes about your restaurant*..... 112

CHAIN **NUMERO UNO.** *Despite the popularity of its pizza, this 40-unit chain has decided to return to its roots as an Italian dinner house. The repositioning includes a decor upgrade and a new menu that gives emphasis to entrees and pastas. Where changes have been implemented, average checks have jumped from $14 to $23*..... 118

MARKET REPORT **SEAFOOD.** *Consumption of fish and seafood continues to climb. In response, operators in virturally every segment are adding new items to their menus. Ironically, however, as interest has increased, supply—especially that of the most-used species—has decreased. Seafood sales are up but rising prices are an inhibiting factor, putting somewhat of a damper on popularity. This comprehensive survey explores the trends*..... 157

INDEPENDENT **CROCODILE CAFE.** *Brothers Robert and Gregg Smith have developed a moderately priced restaurant concept emphasizing fresh, seasonal California cuisine. Reflections Management Corp. has a family of restaurants in the San Gabriel Valley*..... 180

Cover Photograph: Todd Burgermeister. Calligraphy: Beth Meyers.

Published 18 times a year by Restaurant Business Magazine, 633 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017 Vol. 86 No. 16. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and additional office (ISSN 0097-8043). Postmaster please send address changes to Restaurant Business, P.O. Box 5309, Grand Central Station, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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A **BURGER KING** *franchisee in Grand Rapids, MI, says that he has been able to cut employee turnover in half by offering staff a package of benefits that includes day care, money for college and vacation deals* 22

The food industries need "not a skirmish, but a concentrated plan" to fight food-borne illnesses, according to an expert at the Journalists' Conference on **FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION** *in Washington, DC* .. 22

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MARLBORO
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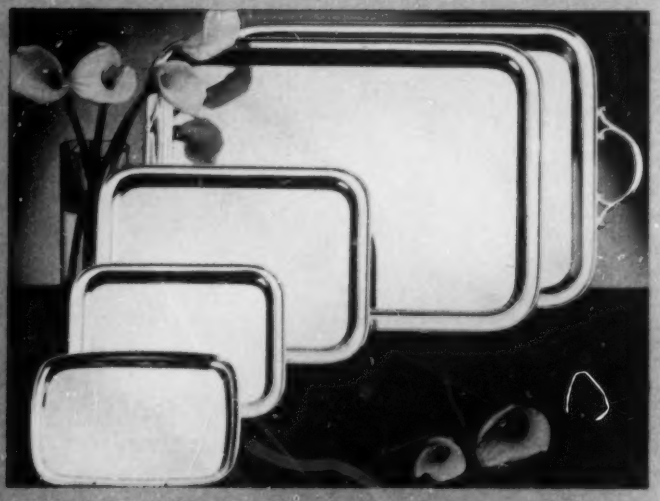
(EPNS)

By World Tableware International



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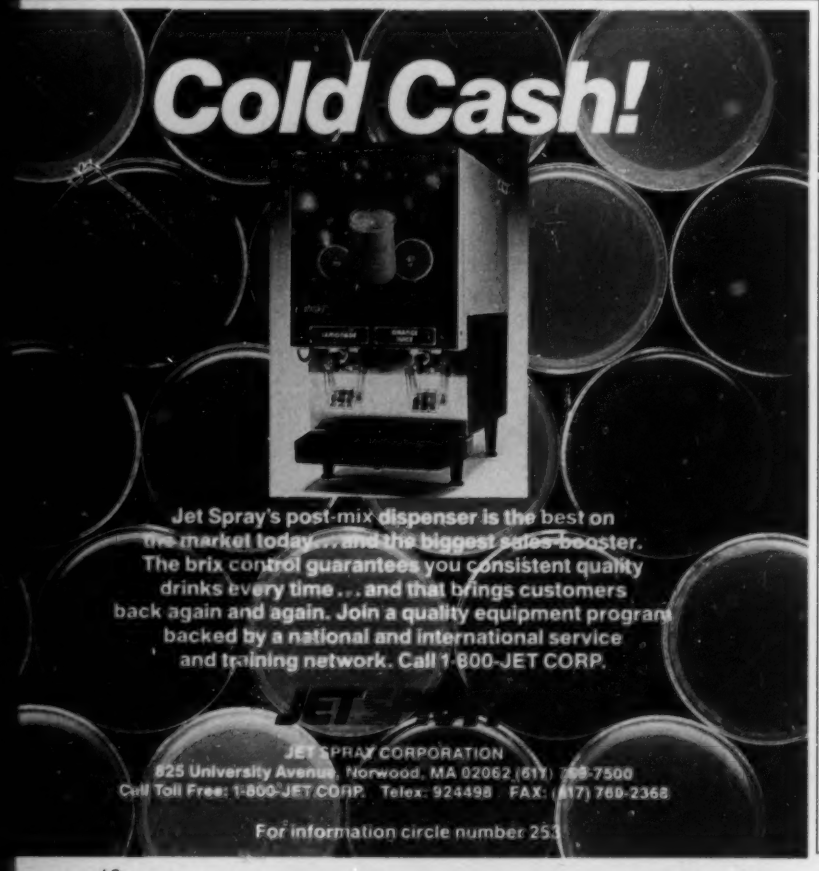
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RESTAURANT BUSINESS Magazine (formerly FAST FOOD) (ISSN 0097-8043) is published 18 times a year by Bill Communications, Inc., 633 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017. Telephone: 212-986-4800. Copyright © 1987 by Bill Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. Subscriptions in the U.S. $68; Canada, $98; elsewhere, $104. Single copies in the U.S. and Canada $5. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional offices. Postmaster: Send address corrections to Restaurant Business, Attention: Roseanne Walsh, Circ. Dept., 633 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017-6743.

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